



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Leopold

Wetland Management District

Planning Announcement and Information Sheet

Comprehensive Conservation Planning

September 2006

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is starting work on a long-term management plan for the Leopold Wetland Management District. This plan, known as a Comprehensive Conservation Plan, will serve as a guide for managing the District for the next 15 years. We are preparing this plan to comply with the Congressional mandate in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. Our intent is that the Comprehensive Conservation Plan will:

- Provide a clear statement of the desired future condition of the District.
- Ensure that management of the District is consistent with the purposes of the District and consistent with the policies of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- Provide District visitors, neighbors, and partners with a clear understanding of the reasons for management actions.
- Provide for long-term continuity in District management.
- Provide a basis for Fish and Wildlife Service staffing and for operation, maintenance, and capital improvement budget requests.



Mallard brood, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Getting Involved!

You can help us by sharing your thoughts and concerns related to the Leopold Wetland Management District. Your concerns will help us focus our planning efforts and insure that we consider the topics that you care about. During the planning process, we will provide other opportunities for you to get involved and play a significant role in developing the plan. For now, we would like to hear your thoughts and concerns.

You are invited to open houses on September 13 and 14 to learn about the planning process and share your thoughts. The open house on September 13 will be held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the John Roche Community Room in the Columbia County Law Enforcement Center, 711 East Cook Street, Portage, Wisconsin. The open house on September 14 will be held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Waukau Community Youth Building, 2711 State Highway 116, Waukau, Wisconsin.

Please take a few moments to review this sheet, then write down your thoughts and submit them to us. Active participation by you and other interested individuals and groups is critical to the success of the planning process.

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You may submit your comments to us at an Open House or by:

Mail to:

Steve Lenz, District Manager
Leopold Wetland Management District
W10040 Cascade Mountain Road
Portage, WI 53901

Visiting our Web Page:

www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/leopold

Who We Are

People often approach us and think that we are Wisconsin state employees working for the Department of Natural Resources. We are not. We are federal employees working for the Federal government. Our mission originates with the U.S. Congress. Although we often work closely with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on projects, we are not part of the state system.

Wetland Management Districts are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an agency within the U.S. Department of Interior. To give you the big picture of the organization, we first describe the Department and Service before describing the Wetland Management District.

U.S. Department of the Interior

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the U.S. Department of Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. From its establishment in 1849, the Department has managed many varied programs including Indian Affairs, administering land grants, improving historic western emigrant routes, marking boundaries, and conducting research on geological resources.

The Department's mission is (1) to encourage and provide for the appropriate management, preservation, and operation of the Nation's public lands and natural resources for use and enjoyment both now and in the future; (2) to carry out related scientific research and investigations in support of these objectives; (3) to develop and use resources in an environmentally sound manner; and provide an equitable return on these resources to the American taxpayer; and (4) to carry out trust responsibilities of the U.S. Government with respect to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The Department collects revenues from the leasing of natural gas and oil resources, both offshore and onshore; from coal, timber, and grazing on Federal lands, and from numerous other sources, such as recreation fees.

The Department of the Interior is comprised of a number of bureaus and offices including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Minerals Management Service, the National Park Service, the Office of Surface Mining, the Office of Insular Affairs, and the Office of the Secretary.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 93-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System of more than 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The Service enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.



Red-winged Blackbird, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wetland Management Districts

Wetland Management District (WMD) personnel manage Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs). WPAs preserve wetlands and grasslands critical to waterfowl and other wildlife. The Duck Stamp Act, passed in 1934, was amended by Congress in 1958 to authorize acquisition of wetlands as WPAs. These public lands, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, were included in the National Wildlife Refuge System in 1966 through the National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act.

Unlike refuges of the National Wildlife Refuge System that may have portions open to public use, WPAs are automatically open to public use unless closed for specific reasons.

Although nearly 95 percent of WPAs are located in the prairie pothole areas of North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana, the WPAs of Wisconsin provide important habitat in the eastern extent of prairie habitat.

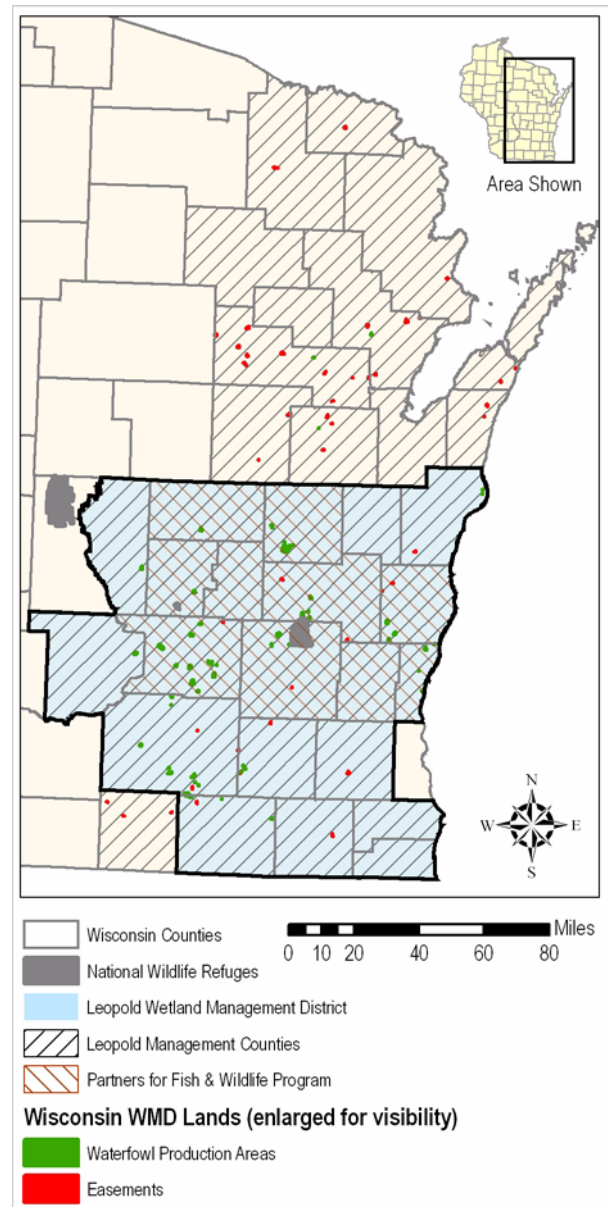
In some WMDs, staff also manage wetland easements; perpetual contracts with willing private landowners that protect their wetlands from draining and filling with soil. In recent years, grassland easements have been purchased to provide permanent grassland cover around wetlands to meet the needs of upland nesting waterfowl and other wildlife.

Prairie wetlands, or “potholes,” are the lifeline for fish and wildlife of the entire prairie landscape from the Rockies to Wisconsin. If wetlands in this vast Prairie Pothole Region were not saved from drainage, hundreds of species of migratory birds would literally have gone down the drain. Just as important, staff at WMDs work extensively with private landowners through voluntary partnerships that enhance private lands for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Leopold Wetland Management District

The Leopold Wetland Management District, established in 1993, manages over 11,600 acres of WPAs in 16 southeastern Wisconsin counties, covering some of the most important waterfowl areas of Wisconsin. The District is authorized to acquire lands and manage WPAs in the 21 counties

Leopold Wetland Management District



depicted in the accompanying figure. The District also administers 45 conservation easements, totaling 3,000 acres in 34 eastern Wisconsin counties, also shown in the accompanying figure.

WPAs consist of wetland habitat surrounded by grassland and woodland communities. While WPAs are managed primarily for ducks and geese, they also provide habitat for a variety of other wildlife species such as non-game grassland birds, shorebirds, wading birds, mink, muskrat, wild turkey, and deer.

The Leopold Wetland Management District is named after Aldo Leopold, who is widely acknowledged as the father of wildlife conservation in America. In tribute to his philosophy, the Leopold Wetland Management District is dedicated to preserving, restoring, and enhancing wildlife habitat in Wisconsin for the benefit of present and future generations.

Our current Vision Statement, which may be revised during the planning process, is:

Waterfowl and other migratory birds find District lands a network of habitat jewels in a landscape of agriculture and increasing development. Native plants and animals, amazing in their diversity, flourish on District and private lands from the efforts of many active partners. Neighbors and visitors enjoy and value District land and work to conserve the region's natural heritage.



Blue-winged Teal drake, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Things You Might Consider

Here are some questions and topics that you might consider as you formulate your comments about the Leopold Wetland Management District. We are providing these topics to jog your thoughts. Do not feel that your comments need to be limited to any of these question or topics. Just tell us what is on your mind. We would like you to express your opinion – positive or negative – on any issue important to you.

Some questions that you might consider are:

- What do you value most about the waterfowl production areas?
- What do you consider to be the most important problems facing the Leopold Wetland Management District?
- What changes do you see coming that will help or challenge the Leopold Wetland Management District?
- How do you see the District fitting into the community?
- What is the most important thing the District can do in the next 15 years?

- As the district manager, what would you do to improve the Leopold Wetland Management District?
- What do you think about the District's Vision Statement?

Some topics that you might consider are:

- Migratory bird conservation
- Threatened and endangered species
- Prescribed burning
- Prairie/grassland management
- Scientific studies
- Wildlife management
- Farming
- Hunting
- Environmental education
- Wildlife observation

Please tell us what you think about Leopold Wetland Management District.

Thank you for your help!